

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A computer user interface device, for use by a user for communicating
2 information to a computer, the user interface device comprising:
3 a first module for producing a first set of user function signals based on user
4 input operations;
5 a second module for producing a second set of user function signals based
6 on user input operations;
7 means for coupling the first module with the second module; and
8 circuitry for coupling the first and second user function signals to the
9 computer.

1 2. A computer user interface device as recited in claim 1, wherein:
2 the first module is a standard module; and
3 the second module is a specialty module, selected from a set of different
4 types of specialty modules.

1 3. A computer user interface device as recited in claim 1, wherein the first module
2 includes a keyboard.

1 4. A computer user interface device as recited in claim 1, wherein the selected
2 specialty module is selected from a set of specialty modules including:
3 (i) a multimedia control module,
4 (ii) a game control module;
5 (iii) a reader module for reading information stored on a storage module;
6 (iv) a Universal Serial Bus (USB) interface module; and
7 (v) a joystick module.

1 5. A computer user interface device as recited in claim 1, wherein the means for
2 coupling includes:

3 a mechanical coupling structure on the first module; and
4 a mechanical coupling structure on the second module, complementary with
5 the mechanical coupling structure on the first module.

1 6. A computer user interface device as recited in claim 5, wherein one of the
2 mechanical coupling structures includes a cavity.

1 7. A computer user interface device as recited in claim 5, wherein the mechanical
2 coupling structures include electrical connectors.

1 8. A computer user interface device as recited in claim 1, wherein the circuitry for
2 coupling the first and second user function signals to the computer includes:
3 first circuitry on one of the first and second modules, for producing first user
4 input signals from the one module;
5 second circuitry on the other of the first and second modules, for producing
6 second user input signals from the other module;
7 a first electrical coupling for providing the first user input signals to the other
8 module;
9 consolidation circuitry for producing a signal stream based on the first and
10 second user input signals; and
11 a second electrical coupling for providing the signal stream to the computer.

1 9. A computer user interface device as recited in claim 8, wherein:
2 the one of the first and second modules is a standard module; and
3 the other of the first and second modules is a specialty module.